



The President's Daily Brief

December 31, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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ANGOLA

With the Organization of African Unity's emergency summit now less than two weeks off, the tempo of fighting in Angola is likely to pick up as the rival regimes attempt to impress African leaders with their strength.

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In northern Angola, the National Front withdrew yesterday from Camabatela after Popular Movement forces bombarded the town with rockets.

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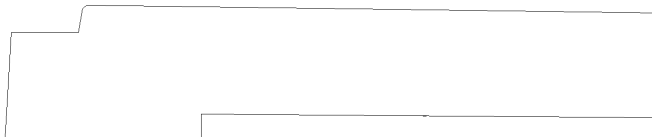
The Popular Movement is trying to create an impression of African nations banding together against the much-publicized South African intervention on behalf of the National Union and National Front. A Popular Movement military spokesman announced in Georgetown, Guyana, yesterday, that Nigeria, Congo, and Guinea-Bissau are ready to send troops to support the Popular Movement.

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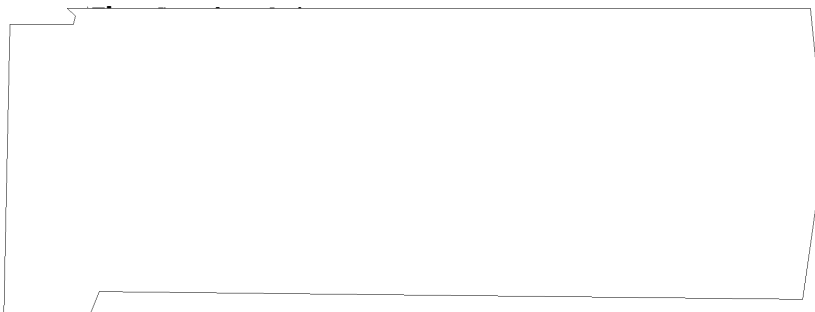
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It seems unlikely that either Nigeria or Congo plans any such involvement. In both cases, domestic political considerations would reinforce the reluctance that most African states have to becoming involved in the internal affairs of another African country. Some troops from the former Portuguese territory of Guinea-Bissau, on the other hand, already may be fighting alongside the Popular Movement. Relations between the ruling party in Bissau and the Popular Movement have long been especially close.

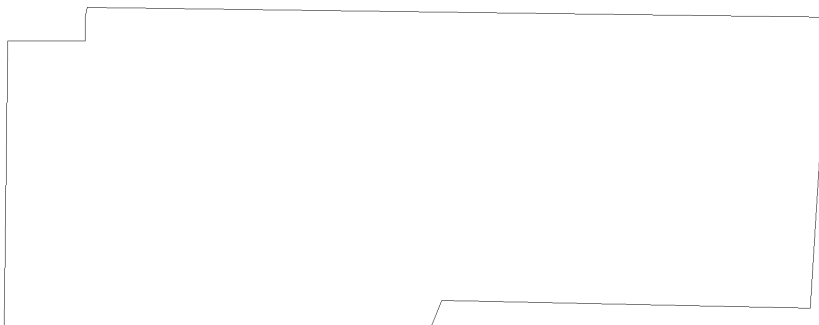
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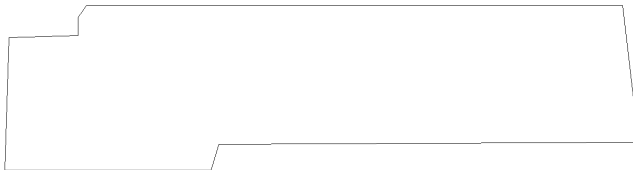


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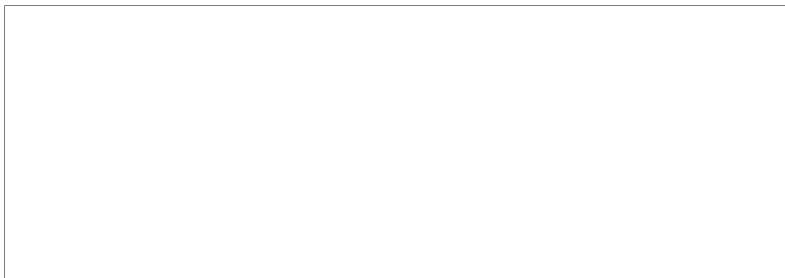


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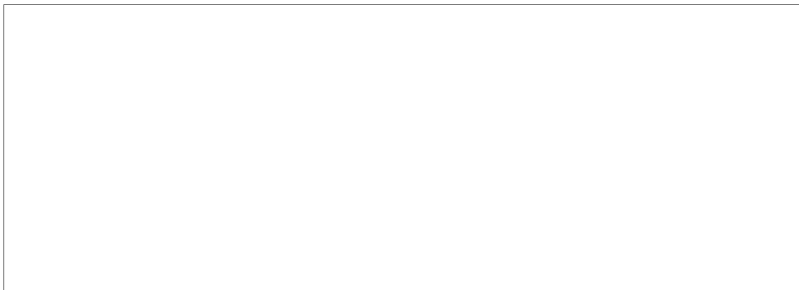
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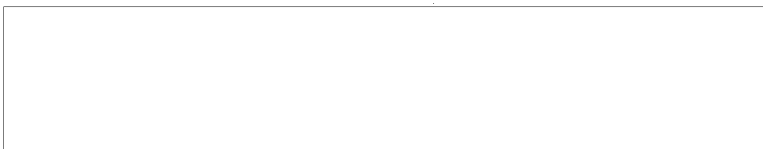
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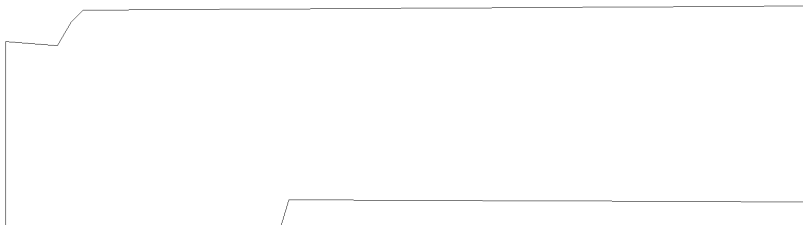
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LEBANON

Lebanese President Franjiyah and Syrian President Asad reportedly have reached agreement on the broad outlines of a political settlement for Lebanon.

According to [] a former Lebanese foreign minister who has been serving as Franjiyah's emissary [], the understanding allows for:

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--Franjiyah to remain in office until his term ends next September.

--Formal meetings between Franjiyah and Prime Minister Karami, as representatives of the country's Christian and Muslim communities, to negotiate the details of a settlement.

--Concessions by Lebanese Christians to bolster the power of the prime minister and strengthen Muslim representation in parliament and the civil service.

--Implementation of existing agreements between the Lebanese government and the Palestinians.

--Syrian and perhaps other international guarantees that the agreement will be respected by Lebanese Muslims and the Palestinians.

--An outside "reconstruction and security mission" to ensure civil order until the Lebanese police force can be expanded to an effective level.

It will take several months to implement this agreement, if it succeeds at all. Armed clashes are certain to recur during this time, and are likely to delay or even undermine the planned talks between Franjiyah and Karami. The continued heavy fighting over the past two months prompted the two to disregard an earlier commitment to enter into direct talks on concrete reform proposals.

THAILAND

Growing discontent over Prime Minister Khukrit's handling of various economic and political problems is prompting the first serious challenge to the eight-month-old coalition.

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Khukrit clearly is in trouble. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the King, reflecting the view of the conservative elite, has begun to speak openly of the need for a "stronger" government. The opposition Democrat Party, the largest single party in the National Assembly, has indicated that it may press for a special session of parliament to vote on a no-confidence motion.

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In addition, the leaders of the Federation of Labor Unions of Thailand have threatened to strike on January 2 in protest against the government's decision to raise the price of rice and sugar at the beginning of the new year--a move that in itself could precipitate a political crisis.

Unless the Prime Minister begins to move forcefully in dealing with the economic and political problems now facing him, it is clear that he will be faced with a major parliamentary challenge when the National Assembly convenes in early February, if not earlier.

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MEXICO

Mexico's position on Zionism and its subsequent awkward somersault on the issue apparently led to Foreign Secretary Rabasa's resignation on Monday.

Rabasa was assigned the task of picking up the pieces when President Echeverria's decision to vote in favor of the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism backfired, worsening relations with Israel and with Jewish organizations in the US and Canada. Faced with a loss of vital tourist and development dollars, Echeverria reversed himself in a succession of twists and turns that embarrassed Rabasa.

The Zionism issue was only the latest of seemingly impulsive and erratic foreign policy decisions made by Echeverria that have gone wrong. Mexico was criticized for breaking all relations with Spain in October in protest against the execution of Spanish terrorists and for abruptly severing diplomatic relations with Chile in November last year. In each case, Rabasa has borne the brunt of the criticism.

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Our embassy in Mexico also speculates that another reason for Rabasa's resignation may be because Echeverria is about to spring a new foreign policy initiative that the foreign secretary could not abide. This latest move could be Mexico's recognizing the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. Echeverria met with the visiting prime minister of Guinea over the weekend, and probably was urged to support the Movement.

Rabasa's replacement, Alfonso Garcia Robles, has headed the country's delegation to the UN since 1970 and has earned a high reputation for his work on disarmament matters.

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His appointment does not imply any modification in Mexican foreign policy and, in any event, he will probably be replaced when Echeverria's designated successor, Jose Lopez Portillo, takes over a year from now.

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NOTE

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Libya

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